## Abstract of the Disclosure

The present invention relates to a system and method for mobile data collection in which a handheld device collects and integrates one or more forms of data. For example, data can include text, digital photographs, digital video, barcodes, sketches, digital signatures, audio,

5    GPS, GIS, document scan, print scan, CAD/CAM scan, and interactive data retrieval from other systems data. Firmware on the handheld device provides a data collection template as a visual display on the handheld device to provide a user interface for collecting the forms of data. The data collection template can comprise consecutive questions nested in menus or submenus, data collection prompts and commands for guiding a user through data collection activities. A

10   permanent record is generated from the collected data. The permanent record is synchronized to manipulate data in the record for later use such as optimization of the data collection template, production of reports from the collected data and storage of the collected data. The data collection template can be optimized during use of the handheld device to organize selections on the data collection template based on certain criteria, such as frequency of use or to reduce

15   redundancy of text data entry and re-order menus or submenus to provide expedient data entry of the most frequently entered selections.